

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 326 564

TM 015 859

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TITLE An Evaluation of Some Self-Concept Scales for Young Children.
PUB DATE Nov 90
NOTE 17p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Mid-South Educational Research Association (19th, New Orleans, LA, November 14-16, 1990).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Adolescents; Child Development; Comparative Analysis; Elementary Education; *Elementary School Students; Factor Structure; Interpersonal Competence; Kindergarten Children; Psychometrics; *Rating Scales; *Screening Tests; *Self Concept Measures; Self Esteem; *Test Use; Test Validity; *Young Children
IDENTIFIERS Behavioral Academic Self Esteem Scale; Kindergarten Inven Developing Social Competency; Martinek Zaichkowski Self Concept Scale Children; Piers Harris Childrens Self Concept Scale

ABSTRACT

Three measures of self-concept or self-esteem and one measure of social competency development, designed for young children, are assessed. The instruments assessed include: (1) the Martinek-Zaichkowski Self-Control Scale for Children (MZSCSC); (2) the Behavioral Academic Self-Esteem Scale (BASE); (3) the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale (PHCSC); and (4) the Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Social Competency (KIDSc). Salient aspects of the 25-item MZSCSC, which was normed for children in grades 1 through 8, include adaptability to children without verbal skills, minimal discrimination among children with adequate self-concepts, assessment of effects of teaching styles, and minimal testing of psychometric properties. Salient aspects of the BASE, which was normed for children in kindergarten through grade 8 and for 4-year-old preschoolers, include a strong factor structure, a range of applications, and substantial data on psychometric properties. Salient aspects of the PHCSCS, which is a self-report measure for children and adolescents, include: a strong factor structure; substantial data on psychometric properties; applicability to screening, clinical, and educational purposes for individuals; and program and intervention evaluation. The KIDSc may provide a measure of self-concept accepting assumptions similar to the PHCSCS, but it is limited to events related to kindergarten. The primary value of the KIDSc as an indicator of self-concept would be for a narrow age range and in a narrow focus (academic/school related rather than global). A 36-item list of references and a 15-item bibliography of other self-concept measures are included. (TJH)

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An Evaluation of Some Self-Concept
Scales for Young Children

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New Orleans, LA

November 14, 1990

ED326564

TM 015859

An Evaluation of Some Self-Concept

Scales for Young Children

This paper will address three measures of self-concept or self-esteem and one measure of developing social competency in young children. All share a focus on perception of the self -- either by the self, him or herself, or by an observer. We shall use the generic term, self-concept, to refer to each measure and to them all collectively; we shall not address theoretical or philosophical issues of distinction between self-concept, self-esteem, and other similar attributes of the self.

The material to follow will address: the age and/or grade levels targeted by each measure; the reading and/or responding skills necessary for the child or for the reporter; the score or scores yielded by each measure; the purpose(s) described by the authors for each measure; and the psychometric properties of the measures. The review of recent psychological literature will also address, when available, research by others than the authors on the psychometric properties of the measures. The review will also provide information on the ways the measures have been used; this latter effort should provide a means of evaluating the extent to which the authors' of the various measures purposes have been fulfilled and/or elaborated.

Included as an Appendix is a listing of several other measures of self-concept cited in psychological literature along with a reference or two to the uses made of each. This list is not exhaustive of self-concept measures; even these, though, were rarely cited.

The Martinek-Zaichkowski Self-Concept Scale for Children

The Martinek-Zaichkowski Self-Concept Scale for Children (MZSCSC) was normed for children in grades one through eight. The authors intimate spreading the grade norms. The MZSCSC requires little or no reading of English, hence, may be used with children who are non-verbal or who are not English-speaking. It also was described as culture-free. Scores on the MZSCSC tend to run high,

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hence, discrimination among children with at least adequate self-concepts is minimal. The construction, then, provided a measure more sensitive to differences and/or change at the lower level of scores. The 25-item scale was factor analyzed and five identifiable factors were extracted. The MZSCSC yields a global measure of self-concept and one may also score individual factors for scores indicative of functioning in specific areas. The factors are named: Satisfaction and Happiness; Home and Family Relationships and Circumstances; Ability in Games, Recreation, and Sports; Behavioral, Personal, and Social Characteristics in School; and Personality Traits and Emotional Tendencies. The five factors are not independent (i.e., some items load into more than one factor) (Martinek & Zaichkowski, 1977).

One of the authors' stated goals with the MZSCSC was to assess effects of various teaching styles on self-concept (Martinek & Zaichkowski, 1977). A close observation of the items on the MZSCSC suggested an "activity orientation," that is, the stimulus pictures focus on obvious behavior that a child might be doing. The content, then, may have some relationship to assumptions made about the construct of self-concept; one inferred assumption would be that self-concept of persons grades one through eight is heavily loaded on physical activity.

The psychometric properties of the MZSCSC were not widely reported. The Manual (Martinek & Zaichkowski, 1977) reported internal consistency reliability (Hoyt estimates) for students in grades one through four. The coefficients ranged from .75 to .92; for all grades combined it was .88. Concurrent validity was reported in terms of correlation with the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale (.49), the Children's Self-Esteem Inventory (.56), and teacher-ratings (.06). Moderate correlations are not unusual among self-concept measures. Variation in underlying assumptions about the construct as well as format and content features affect correlations among affective measures.

A search of publications in the psychological literature using the MZSCSC yielded no particular studies addressing or extending the psychometric properties (e.g., validity) of the scale. The published research has been consistent with

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the intent of the scale. The positive impact of particular teaching models or programs on self-concept has been demonstrated (Martinek, Zaichkowski, & Cheffers, 1977; Schempp, Cheffers, & Zaichkowski, 1983). Particular programs or variables affecting positive self-concept change for special populations such as the physically handicapped (Karper & Martinek, 1982), the learning disabled (Smith & Eason, 1988), and the educable mentally retarded (Blackbourn, 1988) were also addressed. Consistent with earlier comment, the use of the MZSCSC may have particular sensitivity in situations where some focus may be on the physical, overt behavioral components of self-concept.

The Behavioral Academic Self-Esteem Scale

The Behavioral Academic Self-Esteem Scale (BASE) provides normative data for kindergarten through eighth grade girls and boys as well as for four-year old preschool children (combined sexes). Use of the BASE, then, would fit measures of children of preschool age and on into junior high school classes. The BASE is completed, not by the child, but by an observer who should have a minimum of five to six weeks' observation of classroom experience of the target child. Reading/perceiving skills of the child, then, give way to the careful judgment of a good observer. The BASE yields five factor scores which are summed to yield a total score. The five factors emerged from factor analyses of items reflected in Coopersmith's theory of self-esteem. The factors are named: Student Initiative, Social Attention, Success/Failure, Social Attraction, and Self-Confidence. Girls' scores were slightly higher than were males' scores, hence, the separate norms for K - 8. The Manual provides tables for classification into "High Self-Esteem" (> 1 SD above the mean); "Moderate Self-Esteem" ($\pm$ 1 SD of the mean); and "Low Self-Esteem" (> 1 SD below the mean). Also, a table is provided for conversion of scores into percentiles and standard scores. The self-esteem levels (high to low) may be ascertained for factor scores and total scores; the percentile and standard score conversion is for the total score only (Coopersmith & Gilberts, 1982).

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The authors suggested a range of uses for the BASE. These included describing/identifying children's levels of self-esteem, evaluation of instruction or programs, providing at least a partial basis for counseling -- either the child or family or both, -- and research. By virtue of the way the authors set the levels of self-esteem, the BASE is more sensitive in identifying children of extremes (high or low) of self-esteem. This is true for both factor and total scores. Moreover, consideration of factor score levels can provide a basis for identifying areas of particular strength or weakness for the individual child. Inherent in the name (BASE) and assumptions of the construct, the BASE focuses on a particular aspect of self-esteem -- factors associated with success in an academic setting -- rather than on something more approximate to global, broadly-defined encompassing self-concept.

Available data on psychometric properties of the BASE are reported in the Professional Manual (Coopersmith & Gilbert, 1982). Reliability is based on estimates of internal consistency of individual items with the total score and on intercorrelation of factor scores with the total score. The former yielded a mean transformed correlation coefficient of .61 and the latter, .83 (boys) and .84 (girls). Validity was based on the predictive power of the BASE. The BASE was moderately predictive ($r = .50$) of scores for sixth-graders on the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills Form 8 (CTBS). For kindergarten children, the BASE had a weaker correlation ($r = .36$) with scores on the Wide Range Achievement Test. Construct validity was based on factor analytic support of hypothesized factors in academic self-esteem. Five factors (previously named, page 4) were hypothesized and three separate factor analyses substantially supported this; the size of factor loading showed some varying of order, but the same factors emerged. The BASE was recommended as the best teacher--report measure available (Hughes, 1984). Professional literature has addressed minimally the psychometric properties of the BASE. Marsh (1985) reported calculation of a coefficient alpha of .89 for total scores. The same article described weaknesses in the validity data of the BASE. Chieu (1986) cautioned against applying subscale scores due

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to minimal data's being available. Other research of uses and psychometric properties was reviewed by Hughes (1984). Hughes's review gave credibility to the reliability of the BASE. Criterion validity (i.e., correlation with the Piers-Harris Self-Concept Scale for Children and with the Self-Esteem Inventory) was not established. Again, though, (as was the case with the MCSCSC) intercorrelation of affective measures for children typically is low to moderate. Further, the conceptual basis for measuring constructs of self-concept/self-esteem clearly differ and the differences are reflected in the measures, hence, on the score results. Recent psychological literature (viz., reviewed in PSYCHLIT, 1990) showed a major void in reported use of the BASE.

The Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale

The Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale (PHSCSC) is a self-report measure of self-concept in children and adolescents; it may be administered in individual or group settings. The target age range is 8 to 18 years. Caution is warranted for persons with less than third-grade level reading skills, persons who will not cooperate in self-report, persons with low verbal ability/bilingual background, distorted/disorganized thinking, or moderate to severe mental retardation. The PHSCSC yields an overall assessment of self-concept; further, six "cluster scales," developed through several factor analyses, are provided. The clusters are labeled: Behavior; Intellectual and School Status; Physical Appearance and Attributes; Anxiety; Popularity, and Happiness and Satisfaction. The cluster scales are not independent, and some of the 80 items on the PHSCSC are not included among the clusters. Two measures, Response Bias Index and Inconsistency Index, are available as indicators of validity of individuals' performance (Piers, 1984).

Three primary uses were described for the PHSCSC. It may be used as a screening instrument in a variety of high-risk settings -- clinical and educational -- for children and adolescents. Secondly, the PHSCSC may be used as an aid to individual assessment in various counseling settings. Lastly, the PHSCSC has a primary role as a research instrument; assessment of change over

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time, effects of various intervention strategies, and relationships to other person characteristics are appropriate areas for research (Piers, 1984). One of the assumptions underlying the PHCSCS is that self-concept is relatively stable over time and is affected by one's reference groups; this as well as other underlying aspects of the PHCSCS are relevant in using the instrument.

The Revised Manual (Piers, 1984) addressed the psychometric properties of the PHCSCS. Test-retest reliability coefficients among various populations -- general, homogeneous, and special -- were typically about .70 with a range of .42 to .93. Criterion-related (concurrent) validity with referent to other self-concept measures was in the moderate range (.34 to .73). This is predictable based on psychometrics of affective measures of children and adolescents as well as assumptions and purposes governing the construction of the different self-concept scales. The construct validity of the PHCSCS was addressed through studies of the relationship of the measure to several other measures of personality and behavior (e.g., locus of control, cognitive style, and body image). Moreover, research has been undertaken on ability of the PHCSCS to distinguish among criterion groups, the factor composition of the scale, and the replication of that factor structure across groups.

The psychological literature yielded some research by others than the authors on the psychometric properties of the PHCSCS. The validity was addressed in a study among third- to fifth-grade students by way of teacher ratings of school-related self-concept and PHCSCS scores. The PHCSCS scores accounted for less of the variance in school-related self-concept than did teachers' ratings (Haynes, Comer, Hamilton, & Boger, 1987). Halote and Michael's (1984) effort at deriving an academic self-concept scale from PHCSCS items for community college students met with minimal success; only a moderate relationship was found between the derived scale scores and actual achievement. Altmann and Dupont (1988) found the PHCSCS to predict end of year grades for grades 3-6 less well than did the Students' Perception of Ability Scale. Cooley and Ayres (1988a) investigated the reliability and independence of the cluster scores. The

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intercorrelations were at best moderate, which is desirable (i.e., they should not be highly correlated); the alpha coefficients, though, were in the .50 range. Hughes's (1984) review of self-concept measures described the PHCSCS as best for clinical use with older children.

The use of the PHCSCS for evaluation of programs and interventions is common. Special populations have been addressed. Gifted children ages 5-10 showed increases in self-concept following a summer residential experience (Kolloff & Moore, 1989). Gifted children ages 10-18 showed increased self-concept in conjunction with a program to enhance awareness of gender-related issues (Olshen & Matthews, 1987). A program to train remedial teacher-counselors for reading disabled children was evaluated partly on whether or not grades 2-4 children showed increased self-concepts; the effects of this intervention did include the children's increased self-concept (Fisher, Jenkins, Meyers, and Bullis, 1986). Use of fifth-grade peer facilitators effected no significant self-concept changes among second- and third-grade students with behavior problems (Bowman & Myrick, 1987). A community-based cultural enrichment program for Japanese-Americans ages 4-12 effected positive changes in the children's self-concepts (Tomine, 1985a,b). In the more general population, a school-based program for interaction of third- through fifth-graders with senior citizens effected self-concept increases only for third-grade students (Carney, Dobson, & Dobson, 1987).

The validity data presented in the PHCSCS Manual addressed relationships of PHCSCS scores to other personality characteristics, cognitive style, and behavioral attributes. Psychological literature supports the authors' purpose; clearly, the PHCSCS is the most frequently cited self-concept measure used in research in conjunction with other person attributes. PHCSCS self-concept measures were addressed for persons with psychological and/or physical problems. Clear differences in self-concept between psychiatric in-patients and normal persons were lacking, but self-concept was moderately related to severity of the problem (Zimet & Farley, (1984). Children ages 5-16 who were enuretic were

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described as having relatively low self-concepts prior to treatment (Wagner & Giffken, 1986); children who were enuretic both night and day had lower self-concepts than night-only enuretics and both groups had lower self-concepts than children who were not enuretic (Wagner, Smith, & Norris, 1988). Merkins, Perrin, Perrin, and Gerrity (1989) found self-concepts of children ages 5-16 who were chronically ill to be moderately related to the severity of the illness. Children ages 3-16 who had been sexually abused showed a gender interaction effect on self-concept; females had lower self-concepts than control females, and males did not differ from controls (Tong, Oates, & McDowell, 1987). Children of adolescent mothers at grade three level did not differ in self-concept from that of children of mothers in their early 20s (the mothers' education exercised a great effect) (Kinard & Reinherz, 1984). Children ages 2-12 who were in a battered women's shelter showed an age interaction effect on self-concept; younger children had below-average self-concepts while older children did not differ from the appropriate norm group (Hughes & Barad, 1983). In children ages 5-10 who had experienced the death of a significant other, self-concept was found to be similar to the self-concept of comparison children from homes with divorced or separated parents and children from intact families (Reilly, Hasazi, & Bond, 1983). Kelly (1988) found self-concept in children with conduct disorders in grades 7-12 not to differ from self-concept of children with emotional disturbances in grades 3-6, and neither group was outside normal limits of the norm groups. Baum and Owen (1988) found non-learning disabled students to have higher self-concepts than either high ability or low ability learning disabled students; high ability learning disabled students had higher self-concepts than did low ability learning disabled students. Learning disabled students ages 10-14 had lower self-concepts than normal controls, and attributions to ability and effort were related to self-concept for both groups (Cooley & Ayres, 1988b). Johnson (1981) found that higher academic achievement and attribution to one's self for success and to events outside one's self for failure all contributed to higher self-concept. Among students nominated by peers as leaders in grades 3-6,

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males had higher self-concepts than females, although both genders' self-concepts were relatively high (Brown, Furr, Fulkerson, Ware, & Voight, 1984).

The Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Social Competency

We offer some comment on the Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Social Competency (KIDSc) (Correro & Shaklee, 1986). It is not cited in recent psychological literature. The authors reported acceptable psychometric properties. Clearly, it is directed toward kindergarten children. Its content has some aspects in common with the PHCSCS; both are based on "how one feels when...." The KIDSc, then, may provide a measure of self-concept accepting assumptions similar to those of the PHCSCS. The focus of the KIDSc is on events related to kindergarten; hence it is narrow in focus. Attention to the items on the KIDSc, though, indicates some generalization may be appropriate. Approximately one-half of the items could have implications for functioning outside the kindergarten activity in that no direct statement of school or kindergarten per se is explicit. The context and train of thought likely conveyed to children completing the KIDSc can mitigate the generalization beyond the kindergarten setting. The primary value of the KIDSc as an indicator of self-concept would be for a narrow age range (kindergarten) and in a narrow focus (academic/school related rather than global). The philosophy of the KIDSc and the PHCSCS seem so similar that each may complement the other in appropriate applications; one should note the PHCSCS was not standardized for children below the fourth grade level; part of the PHCSCS philosophy was that younger children do not possess a general sense of self-worth but were capable of evaluating specifics -- as is the focus of the KIDSc.

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Appendix

Listing of Other Measures of Self-ConceptBrown IDS Self-Concept Referents Test

Podmore, V. N. (1988). Mothers' interactive behaviors and their preschool assessments: Relationships and issues. *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies*, 23, 165-174.

Children's Self-Social Constructs Test

*McDowell, A. L., & Lindholm, B. W. (1986). Measures of Self-esteem by preschool children. *Psychological Reports*, 59, 615-621.

McDaniel-Piers Young Children's Self-Concept Scale

Sandoval, J. (1984). Repeating the first grade: How the decision is made. *Psychology in the Schools*, 21, 457-462.

Pictorial Self-Concept Scale

Culross, R. R. (1985). Adaptation of the Pictorial Self-Concept Scale to measure self-concept in young hearing-impaired children. *Language, speech, and Hearing Services in Schools*, 16, 132-134.

Preschool Self-Concept Picture Test

*McDowell, A. L., & Lindholm, B. W. (1986). see above

**Henderson, D., & Abrams, P. (1983). A comparison of selected dimensions of the self-concept and three self-concept tests for pre-school children. *Early Childhood Development and Care*, 13, 1-16.

Primary Self-Concept Inventory

McDowell, A. L., & Lindholm, B. W. (1986). see above

Bruneau, O. J. (1984). Comparison of behavioral characteristics and self-concepts of American Indians and Caucasian preschoolers. *Psychological Reports*, 54, 571-574.

Process-in-Action-Approach

- Chafel, J. A. (1987). Social comparisons by young children in preschool: Naturalistic illustrations and teaching implications. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education*, 2, 97-107.

Purdue Self-Concept Scale for Preschool Children

- Cauley, K., & Tyler, B. (1989). The relationship of self-concept to prosocial behavior in children. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 4, 51-60.
- Burge, P. L. (1982). The relationship between sex-role identity and self-concept of preschool children. *Child Study Journal*, 12, 249-257.
- **Henderson, D., & Abrams, P. (1983). see above

The Tactile-Visual Technique (TacVi)

- Rodriguez, A. S., & Zurcher, L. A. (1986). The TacVi technique: A tactile-visual method for exploring the self-concept of preschool children. *Child Welfare*, 65, 305-311.

The Thematic Apperception Test

- Zern, D. W., & Stern, G. W. (1983). The impact of obedience on intelligence and self-concept: A longitudinal study involving different situational contexts. *Genetic Psychology Monographs*, 108, 245-265.

The Thomas Self-Concept Values Test

- **Henderson, D., & Abrams, P. (1983). see above